And All That's Best of Dark and Bright

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And All That's Best of Dark and Bright

by amoralagent

Summary

"In love, the romantic view would be to trust your instincts. But it has proved practically to be a disaster." That made Will smile.

Will likes watching Hannibal draw. Hannibal likes being admired.

Notes

Title: She Walks in Beauty by Lord Byron

Nursing an unusually small glass of scotch, Will sat down at the table, across from Hannibal, and watched him draw. Seeing those destructive hands, skin exposed and tendons working, his suit jacket removed, sleeves rolled up- it was gorgeous. He liked seeing the concentration on his face, the deft movements of his hands.

Really, he knew the concentration could never be untainted- his presence in the room took too much focus away from whatever task Hannibal was doing. They both knew this, in some sixth-sense kind of way. In his current state of bedclothes (having changed back into comfier attire once he'd come home from an evening dog walk), it was even more apparent. Hannibal's distracted attention was more of a feeling than it was displayed by action.

Even so, Will often observed Hannibal for the sake of observation, with little else to it. He'd even sat beside Hannibal on numerous occasions, settled half in his lap as he was trying to work on a drawing in one of the various journals he kept, armed with his own stolen pencil, and obnoxiously doodled next to his extravagant drawings that he was attempting to work on. Either that, or they'd both sit and idly sketch whatever they wanted. Will wasn't all that good at drawing, but it was still fun; something to occupy time, in the best company he could ask for. Hannibal- much to Will's flattery and irritation- would often draw Will naked, or amidst a moment of pleasure, or unaware in asleep. Anything tender and private. Expressions only he had ever had the wonderment of properly seeing.

Other times, he'd draw architecture, or birds, or remembered studies of dissections, human or animal, sometimes ambiguous. He'd tell their origins to Will, if he asked.

Will always made out that his work was better than Hannibal's anyway, even if it was akin to a child's rendering of a cartoon dog. Not that it was even a competition. Hannibal would smile, and answer with a warm kiss.

Without his own images to conjure up in charcoal, Will admired Hannibal's, moving a finger lightly across the frayed edge of an old piece scattered on the desk. It was a study of Will's neck and jaw, possibly bruised, carved out of the page like a Michelangelo sculpture out of marble. The rest of his head was suggested in delicate lines, unfinished. Sighing, Will scratched his cheek, "I wish I could create art like this."

Hannibal hardly reacted: "Anyone can, provided the right amount of time dedicated. Talent is nothing but a pursued interest, and isn't as innate as people think." He didn't even look up from the page. The shushing sound of pencil on paper countered that of the ice clinking in Will's glass as he raised it again.

"Hm. True. I think I'd fail to finish any of it." Hannibal did glance up at him then, curious in the angle of his head.

"You don't lack the patience."

"I lack the *drive*." Will corrected, sighing again, "Any hobbies I have are more-- practical. Hands-on. Less to do with the abstract."

"You have enough thoughts of the abstract, I'm sure." Hannibal smiled, and Will considerately nodded, even if Hannibal wasn't looking.

"You're more creative than I am."

"Yes. In some ways." He met his eyes again, confirming any innuendos, and if they weren't past it, it would've made Will blush. Instead, he rolled his eyes, grin sordid.

They lapsed into silence, interrupted only when Will went over to the drinks cabinet for a top-up, pouring Hannibal a glass too. After a drawn out time, Will sat back and studied how the atmospheric lighting of the room reflected against Hannibal's suit; the sharp lines of his bone structure. It made his face look more like a skull with skin drawn tight over the top. For an inexplicable reason, it made something burn hotly in his chest between his ribs.

When he spoke, his voice warmed the quiet instead of soiling it, "Do you think artistic talent is natural, to some extent?"

Hannibal took the pencil off of the page and looked to him, then past him: "The suggestion dissuades the majority of people from ever trying to improve on their skills- it would be a hinderance to anyone, to adopt such elitist beliefs. Without practice, any ability we are born with does not improve as it could; an assumption that talent is natural makes excuses to be complacent."

Will sipped his drink, "What do you believe, then?"

"It's-- unreasonable, to assume anything about a person is intrinsic from birth. We're cultivated beings."

Smiling slightly, Will tilted his head, attentive, "Do you think your violence is attached to this? Does it go hand-in-hand?"

"Art is sensory-based. So are violent experiences. When linked, they can balance, or fuel one another." Hannibal offered, taking a drink from his own glass, savouring it.

"Isn't that arguing against the supposed foreknowledge we have of our animal instincts?"

At that, he noticed that Hannibal straightened little in his seat, reclining, giving his excitement at the subject away. The drawing went ignored, "Perhaps. But in wider society, those natural urges are repressed, for decency's sake. That is probably why artists are so revered, in their ability to translate difficult emotions, in a more *passive* way." Will thought about that, wondering if Hannibal could ever be content to express himself through 'passive' art only; involving other people vicariously instead of literally, in the use of their organs and hollowed out corpses. He doubted it, "Are our instincts to be trusted at all, if we can't understand from where they stem?"

"It depends on the context, I guess." Cheekily, Will slid a bare foot up Hannibal's calf and up onto the inner part of his thigh, until it was caught with one hand. He blinked at Hannibal innocently, his expression soft and unyielding, as he lowered both hands to massage it. Will hummed in contentment, even if it wasn't what he was going for.

"In love, the romantic view would be to trust your instincts. But it has proved practically to be a disaster." That made Will smile.

"Hm, yeah. My instincts have got me uh- sick, imprisoned, gutted. Shot, a couple of times, and almost killed- numerous. *Actually* killed, once." He quipped, considering the amused look around Hannibal's eyes: "But humans all have a-- *compulsions* to suffering."

Hannibal looked... besotted, "Was it your intuition, then. That told you to love me?" Will wasn't caught off guard by the question, but it made his heart thump. His smile widened.

"I don't know. I'd say it was something far more irrational than that." He noted how the movements of Hannibal's hands on his foot rippled the muscles in his arms, "No one consciously chooses who they fall in love with."

"But we choose what we do about it." He countered, looking down to the thin veined skin at Will's ankle- a vulnerable place offered to him, as casually as ever, but not thoughtlessly.

"I think we've both made some reckless choices. Some bad. But they worked out well for us." The unfettered sincerity in Will's voice was a glorious thing, and far too rare.

"I concur."

"Good. But you're right in saying that instinct has been little better than calculation, when it comes to underwriting our love stories."

"Yet, we are both people of impulsive and emotional natures," Hannibal said, amusement growing, "Despite what recent journalism would have you believe." They'd both seen, and enjoyed, the retrospective articles musing on their whereabouts and relationship two years after their disappearance. Their death. Will had laughed at the crude, unknowingly truthful, details of it all. Hannibal had later confirmed them, in bed.

"Well, no one wants to think that a cannibalistic serial killer has feelings. It's *too human*." He intoned, draining his glass, "Let alone that he can be in love. And that it's reciprocated."

Hannibal smiled, claiming and beautiful, "They call you insane."

Will sniffed a laugh, "Let them." The lovely touches on the ball of his foot stopped, just to cradle.

He watched Hannibal's expression lighten, "Mad about me?"

"Shut up." Will half-laughed, taking his foot away, and replacing it with the other, in a wordless request. Hannibal obliged him.

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